

The Web site for the National Textile Center states that it is a consortium of eight universities, Auburn, Clemson, Cornell, Georgia Institute of Technology, North Carolina State University, University of California Davis, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Philadelphia University, that share human resources, equipment and facilities. This consortium serves the U.S. fiber-textile-retail complex industries.

It's not at all clear what amount this program is to be funded. The committee report language says funding for two textile-related programs, but the proposed funding amount is nowhere to be found in the text of the bill or the committee report.

The manager's amendment recommended that the U.S. foreign and commercial service account be increased by \$5 million to \$245,720,000 in order to fund "two textile-related programs." We can only infer that this increase will fund this program and another program, but there is no way for us to be certain. Inquiries made to the relevant subcommittee failed to clarify the matter.

Members of Congress as stewards of the taxpayer's dollars, as stewards, need and deserve more information to make informed decisions.

Beyond the transparency issues here, I simply don't agree here, again, with this picking winners and losers here. I understand the textile industry has undergone great transformation with jobs, a lot of jobs going overseas. There is great difficulty there. I don't minimize that. That is true with a lot of industries.

In my district and elsewhere, a lot of people would like to receive funding to help their industries transition. We simply can't do it everywhere.

Some Internet searching on the National Textile Center indicated the center already exists and has received generous funding in the past. A press release from the center touted that more than \$9 million in Federal funds were received in 2001. That, again, is a little confusing when we are told that this will fund the development of a national textile center that seems to already exist.

But anyway, again, here, this is an example of a program we have over the Department of Commerce that we have used that funds programs like this. I simply don't see the need to earmark additional funds to supplant or to replace or to augment funds that have already been appropriated and for which there is a process that has been established for competitive grants to be given.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I am joined by 11 colleagues

from North Carolina, as well as colleagues from several other States, in requesting fiscal year 2008 funding for the National Textile Center. I want to say to the gentleman introducing this amendment that if there is, in fact, any lack of transparency or any confusion about our intent, I would be happy to clear that up.

We do indeed intend for this funding to go to the National Textile Center, which has been established, as the gentleman acknowledged, for a number of years. In fact, it has received funding since fiscal year 1992. It is a center that involves a number of universities and has expanded since that time. And it's a center that has a well-established track record.

The National Textile Center is just what the name suggests. It's a national program for a national industry that affects our national competitiveness. There is a consortium of eight leading research universities that participate: Auburn, Clemson, Cornell, Georgia Tech, North Carolina State, Philadelphia University, University of California Davis, and University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Now, any of us from North Carolina or other traditional textile-producing States are all too accustomed to news of textile operations closing their doors. Some may be shortsighted enough to suggest that the textile industry is unworthy of investment, given the loss of manufacturing jobs over the past decade.

I and my colleagues come to exactly the opposite conclusion. The textile industry is a major player still, and will continue to be a major player in the U.S. economy. It employs 600,000 workers nationwide, and it contributes almost \$60 billion to the national GDP.

It's true that many lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs have left our States, but the domestic textile industry is undergoing a remarkable transformation. The research provided by the National Textile Center is an initial factor in that transformation. It's helping advance the industry in new directions, providing new, higher-paying jobs, increasing U.S. competitiveness in the process.

As the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, I know firsthand about the new fabrics and fibers that are protecting our first responders in new and threatening situations. That's just one example. The suits worn in this Chamber, the next generation of suspension bridges—there is a long list of products and technologies that this research consortium is going to help shape.

The new textile products and the processes created by this research are valued at three times the Federal investment to date, so it's certainly not the time to pull the rug out from under these vital projects.

Mr. Chairman, the National Textile Center is needed by a national industry. The National Textile Center is wanted and welcomed by the Depart-

ment of Commerce. And the National Textile Center was requested by more Members than any other project in this bill. It's a worthy recipient of Federal funding, and I urge defeat of the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, when it comes to earmarks, it's easy for me to embrace my earmark as good government and reject your earmark as wasteful pork. By the same token, it's easy for you all to embrace your respective earmarks as good government and reject mine as useless, wasteless pork. That probably amounts to hypocrisy, but it is nonetheless a political fact of life.

Now, when you talk about the textile industry, I become very subjectively involved. My late momma was a machine operator in a hosiery mill. She later worked for the Blue Bell Corporation, which was the predecessor to the Wrangler and the VF Corporation. Her job was to sew pockets on overalls, a tedious, demanding job, before the days of air conditioning, I might add. So when people gang up on the textile industry, they are ganging up on my momma. It bothers me.

We could talk all day here. Many of my friends from North Carolina, we represent what was recognized as the buckle of the textile belt. It's a beleaguered industry, and we don't need to be piling on at this juncture.

My friend from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) has already suggested the significance, but let me repeat it.

The National Textile Center, NTC, and the Textile/Clothing Technology Corporation, [TC]2, play a critical role in helping the U.S. textile and apparel industry, which currently employs over 600,000 workers nationwide and contributes nearly \$60 billion to the Nation's gross national product on an annual basis to compete with textile manufacturers in other countries.

It should also be noted that the industry is a primary supplier of employment to women and minority workers, with many of these jobs located in depressed and rural areas as well as major inner cities.

The NTC is proven and provides a highly effective structure for maximizing fundamental research and development efforts of value to the textile and apparel industrial sector. The value of new textile products and processes that have been created by NTC research is over \$300 million, nearly three times the Federal investment in NTC to date.

[TC]2 is engaged in helping to transform the U.S. textile and apparel industry into a highly flexible supply chain, capable of responding to rapidly changing market demands. During calendar year 2006, 60 percent of [TC]2's